The direct and indirect taxes do not make any distinction between public and private sector. They enjoy similar treatment under the provisions of the Act. Further sales tax concessions are given by State Governments to public and private sector oil companies for setting up new refineries.

(b) The upstream oil PSUs like ONGC, OIL & GAIL and oil marketing companies (OMCs) namely IOCL, HPCL, BPCL and IBP are bearing a large part of the subsidy on PDS SKO, domestic LPG, MS and HSD, which is being passed on to the consumers. This burden is not being borne by the private sector oil companies.

Dispute on Sakhalin Project

2669. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a dispute between India and Russia about Sakhalin;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the stands taken by India and Russfa^pn these issues; and

(d) the steps taken by Government lo thrash out these issues amicably?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Achievements under NELP

2670. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ever increasing consumption of hydrocarbons has put the country under compulsion for venturing of new oil/gas discoveries;

(b) the level of achievements out of NELP in country's self sufficiency in petroleum products; and

(c) Government's future plan to overcome the demand growth indicating the target for raising the cude production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government of India has awarded 110 blocks in five rounds of NELP held so far. As on date 34 oil/gas discoveries have been made in these blocks by various operators. Out of 34 discoveries two gas discoveries have been put on commercial production. Remaining discoveries are in various stages of appraisal/development.

(c) Several steps have been taken/are in hand to accelerate hydrocarbon exploration and production activities in the country to meet the growing demand including the following:—

(i) Carving out more and more areas for exploration for offer under various rounds of NELR

(ii) Quicker development of discovered reserves for enabling commencement of production.

(iii) Use of stimulation techniques for increasing production from existing fields.

(iv) Application of EOR/IOR techniques for increasing recovery factor from Existing fields.

(v) Arresting decline from ageing fields.

(vi) Acquisition of exploration acreages and producing properties overseas to bring in equity oil.

(vii) Substitution of oil through use of non-conventional source of energy such as bio-diesel, ethanol, etc.

Adulteration in Diesel

†2671. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that adulteration in the diesel is taking place worth Rs 30 kharab every year in the country;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that while it deteriorates environment on the one hand, it also causes loss to the revenue on the other;

(c) if so, whether Government would take any steps to curb such adulteration; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.